

#103

EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

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20 August 1974

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BULGARIAN-YUGOSLAV

Border Incident

A reported border incident in which two Bulgarian civilians shot and wounded a Yugoslav police officer will further strain relations between Belgrade and Sofia.

According to a Belgrade press release of August 20, the Bulgarians, carrying revolvers and "a large amount of ammunition", illegally entered Yugoslavia on August 10 and attacked the policeman. The Bulgarians, now under arrest, are in the custody of "competent organs".

This is the first such shooting in recent memory, but similar incidents punctuated relations between Yugoslavia and its neighbors after the Tito-Stalin break in 1948. Belgrade's bare-bones domestic coverage of the affair will jog the Yugoslavs' memories of this and earlier periods of free-lance terrorist activity in the troubled border region with Bulgaria.

Sofia has thus far not publicly noted the fracas. This silence adds to the suspicious atmosphere created by Belgrade's delayed and terse announcement.

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